

2615
*Peace with God, and with one another,
a sure Way to a good Peace Abroad.*

Recommended in a

S E R M O N

Preached in the

Parish-Church of *Great Snoring* in
the County of *Norfolk*,

O N

Wednesday the 4th of February 1740,

Being the Day appointed for a

General FAST, &c.

By ROBERT LEEKE, B. D. Rector of the Parish.

N O R W I C H :

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By permission of the

SEERMON

Parish-Church of Great Yarmouth in
the County of Norfolk.



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Joel II. 12, 13.

Therefore also now saith the Lord, turn ye even unto Me, with all your Heart, and with Fasting, and with Weeping, and with Mourning.

Rent your Hearts, and not your Garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful, slow to Anger, and of great Kindness, and repenteth him of the Evil.

WHEN the Prophet before us delivered these Words; the Kingdom of Judah was under the Apprehension of a twofold Calamity, each very grievous in its Kind, the Incurſion of a Foreign Enemy, and a Famine even at their very Doors. *Be ye aſhamed,* ſays he, *O ye Husbandmen,* Chap. i. and Verſe 11, *for the Wheat and for the Barley, becauſe the Harveſt of the Field is periſhed:* And again, Verſe 18, *How do the Beaſts groan? The Herds of Cattel are perplexed, becauſe they have no Paſture; yea, the Flocks are made deſolate.* Beſides this great Scarcity of Proviſion, both for Man and Beaſt; the Prophet tells them there was nigh at hand, Chap. ii. Verſe 2, *a great People and a ſtrong, ſuch as there never had been the like before amongſt them, neither ſhould be any more for many Generations.* In this Situation of Affairs, I apprehend, this Prophet was ſent by a ſpecial Commiſſion from God to tell the

People, that both Famine and the Sword were coming upon them, by God's special Direction, as a Punishment for their Sins; and lest the People should sink under the Terror of this bad News, with the Delivery of it, he hath Orders from God to let them know that *God is gracious and merciful, slow to Anger, and soon repenteth himself of the Evil.* Therefore a National Fast must be appointed, when King, Priest, and People must send up publick Prayers and Supplications to the Divine Majesty; all asking Pardon for their several Sins, expressing to God their Concern for them, with the outward Tokens of Repentance, such as Weeping, Fasting, and Mourning, and with these the inward ones of turning to the Lord with all their Hearts, and vowing solemnly before Him, that they were all resolved henceforth to be a more penitent, holy, and obedient People. And thus we read, Chap. i. Verse 14, *Sanctifie a Fast, call a solemn Assembly: Gather the Elders, and all the Inhabitants of the Land of Judah, into the House of the Lord their God; and cry unto the Lord, Alas! for the Day, for the Day of the Lord is at hand, and as a Destruction from the Almighty shall it come.* And again, Chap. ii. Verse 16, much the same Words. To which the Prophet adds, besides the Words of the Text, *Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, weep between the Porch and the Altar; and let them say, Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to Reproach, that the Heathen should rule over them.*

When these Prayers, Vows, and Intercessions should be made to God; and when their Hearts, along with the Words of their Lips, should be turned to the Lord their God; then would God be jealous for his People, and spare the Land; then would God send them Corn, and Wine, and Oil enough; then should Peace return with Plenty; for with his own Right-Hand would He drive away from the Land the great Northern Army coming upon them, He would drive them into a Land barren and desolate, with his Face towards the East Sea, and his hinder Parts towards the utmost Sea; and such Numbers of their Enemies should die before their Face, that the very Stink of their dead Bodies should cover the Land: Fear not therefore, O Land, says the Prophet, on the bad News I have told you; but rather be glad, and rejoice, for you know now from me how to recover the Favour of God to you; who, upon your Return to Him, will assuredly do great Things for you, Verse 21.

There

There can be no Case in the *Old Testament* more like our own in all its Circumstances: And therefore what have we of this Land to do more, or less, than that which is of so much Importance to us all; namely, to take to ourselves the Prophet's Directions to the Land of *Judah*: Because Famine and a Foreign Sword, whenever they are coming upon a People, are as much the Visitations of God under the *New*, as the *Old Testament*; and though (blessed be God) our Scarcity is not yet a Famine, nor are our Liberties as yet destroyed by a Foreign Force, but if God in his Mercy send us not more kind Seasons than we have had for some Time past, and go not forth himself with our Armies and our Fleets, both one and the other will be speedily amongst us.

This being our present Situation, from the Authority of God in a like Case, and the Authority of Church and State under him, every Person in this Kingdom is desired to take Notice of the Displeasure of a God, which seems to threaten us with his National Judgments; and therefore it is every one's Duty to inquire what is amiss in himself, and what that accursed Thing may be too in a National Way amongst us, which hath seemingly provoked a God to take a Rod into his own Hand for our Correction: Under this Apprehension of Things, every individual Person should immediately begin to search his own Ways to the Bottom, and inquire truly of his Conscience how far he may have contributed by his Sins to bring on a Judgment upon this Nation; and if every one for himself would resolve to repent and reform, every one by so doing would be an Instrument in saving his Country from impending Ruin.

Now in order to proceed rightly with ourselves in a National Repentance, we of this Land cannot do better than take the Method which the Prophets of old always advised the People under the Apprehension of a National Judgment, which was to make the written Laws of God amongst them the Rule of their Inquiry; as whether there was any general Apostasy from the Worship of the true God, or any general Corruption of Manners; and in what Way the Corruption was it could soon be known, by comparing their own Lives with the written Laws of God; for they always found it true in the Event as they were told, That God never brought a National Judgment upon them but for some National Sins: A Revolt always it was in Numbers from the written Laws

of God. In like Manner under the Christian Church, the Fathers in the early Ages of it have delivered down this Observation with one Voice to us; That God Almighty never brought a Persecution upon his Church, but when the Want of Faith or Manners in his People called for a Scourge.

If we then of this Nation are capable of being advised from the best Advice that can be given, either from the History of the *Jewish* or Christian Church; if we have any Regard for the present Safety of our Country, as well as the future Salvation of our Souls; if we think that Peace and Plenty are the Blessings of God, and that God will be the sooner inclined to give them to us the sooner we return to him; if the fore Judgments of War and Famine carry any Terror with them, or we can believe that He will revoke what He threatens upon the Repentance of his People, as He hath often done; then is it on all Accounts our unbounded Duty to begin a National Repentance on this Day, set apart for a publick Humiliation of ourselves to him; to turn to the Lord our God with Weeping, Fasting, and Mourning; and never cease this good Work, till we are wholly turned unto him with all our Hearts, and give him henceforward better Proofs than we have done of being a willing and obedient People.

The Incouragement we have to do it is great and good: For whilst God publishes the coming of his Judgments, He proclaims at the same Time his Desire to be merciful; *that He is always slow to Anger, and soon repents himself of the Evil* He hath threatened, or as soon as He sees his People repent of their evil Ways to him. Now then let us begin the Inquiry into ourselves with an Examination of our Ways, with Regard to the first Principles of Religion.

First then, Is it our peculiar Concern to live in the Fear of God, to be zealous of his Honour, his publick Worship, and Glory amongst us? Or is this so far from being the visible Character of the present People amongst us, that there never was a Time when there was a more just Complaint of the publick Worship of Almighty God being neglected? Let the Want of Reverence for the Lord's Day speak to this Point for us. Now let any Man of common Understanding seriously consider this Point, and try his Conscience truly upon this Head, whether he can sincerely think that he lives in the Fear of God, or dares say to his God within himself

self that he hath any Regard for his Honour, any Concern that his Name and Providence be hallowed publickly upon Earth, who seldom or never joins in the publick Worship of Almighty God in the common Assemblies of his People; nay, whether it does not seem an high Insult upon the Divine Majesty to contrive to spend the Lord's-Day in travelling, visiting, or sauntering about, or worse; thereby taking Pains as it were to let the World see, that whilst other good People are met together to shew forth the Praises of God for his Works of Creation, Providence, Redemption, and all other publick Mercies, to ask God Pardon of their Sins, and pay every other publick Homage due to his Dominion and Providence, they desire to have no Share in such Acts of Religion: What is this but to tell the World in Fact that they have little or no Belief of his very Being and Providence, no Thanks visibly to offer up to Heaven for such Things as Christians call the publick Mercies of God? nay, in such a Conduct there is not only no Sense of revealed, but little (very little) of Natural Religion. The general Sense of Mankind in all Ages concurs with us in this Matter; for no moralized Heathen Nation upon Earth would ever have thought any Person much better than an Atheist who turned his Back habitually on the publick Sacrifices of the Gods, which in every Nation were looked upon ever as the most proper Modes of testifying the publick Respects due to their Dominion and Providence over them: And this Complaint is so far from being chargeable on a few, that it daily increases upon us, insomuch that it is difficult to say whether many of the high or low Part of Mankind are more faulty here; only in Point of Sinfulness the higher Men are in Station, or the better they are taught, the worse they are when they become bad, in as much as the commanding Force of their Example leads the Way to the inferior Sort: And besides this, the higher Ranks of Men always take it ill to be charged with Ignorance of their Duty, which is really many Times the Case of the inferior Sort; and therefore where Ignorance of the first Principles of Religion cannot, will not be pleaded, there we can do no less than charge a deliberate Intention to sink the Reverence due to the Lord's Day, and with it the Honour and publick Worship due to Almighty God for his visible Care and Preservation of Mankind, and for his publick Blessings to them in all the Concerns of Life.

Secondly,

Secondly, A People that have got the Light of the Gospel clearly shining amongst them, and fearful at the same Time lest they should fall under the Judgments of God, would do well to consider at this Season whether they are duly thankful for such a Blessing; that is, Do they heartily thank Almighty God for the Honour He hath done his People in sending his only Son amongst them? Do they treat the Person and Character of his Son, since his Coming, with all that Honour and Reverence due to the Divinity of his Character? And do the Orders delivered from God by his Son to the World, make that vast Impression upon us that a Message of that Weight and Authority ought to do? Do we freely accept him as our Law-Giver; love him as our Redeemer; and depend upon his Assistance, as God and Man, for the obtaining all these precious Promises He made to the World in the Name of his Father, the most High God and Father of us all? And do we live like a People that believed all these important Truths, or otherwise? All these Things must be our bounden Duty, if Jesus Christ be the Son of God; and there is no Truth certain in the World, that we do not see with our own Eyes, if this be not so; and should we fail in any of these great Points of Duty, we cannot imagine (according to common Sense and Reason) that any Thing can be more displeasing to Heaven, or any Thing sooner bring down the Vengeance of God upon us, than slighting the last Commands, with the highest Blessings given to the World by the preaching of his Son: The very Nature of such a Message, in every View of it, is very awful; it calls for the serious Attention of every Man that ever heard of it; it awakens every Faculty of the Understanding, and every Passion of the Soul, to a serious Inquiry about it, to consider carefully what are the great Ends proposed by God to us in such a Message; and nothing but infallible Demonstration, that there never was such a Message sent from God by his Son, should make us unconcerned about it, or not give good Heed to it. As we of the Christian Ministry are intirely convinced of the undeniable Certainty of what we preach concerning the Son of God, a greater Certainty than which no History knows, we think it our bounden Duty to expostulate from Time to Time with our People about their Faith in Christ Jesus; and we should be wanting in our Duty, both to the God above and to the Happiness of the Nation wherein we live, did we not most earnestly exhort all under our Care at this critical Season to examine themselves,

themselves, whether they bear that high Regard for their Religion they should profess to do, or not; lest through Want of a sincere Faith, or even a due Zeal for it, they should contribute to bring down the Judgments of God upon this Church or Nation: For why should we imagine, that this Church or Nation are more dear to God, than were the first *Asiatick* Churches mentioned in the *Revelations*, in whom a Lukewarmness in Religion is declared to be a sufficient Cause to take their Religion from them? And generally the Loss of Civil Liberty followed the Loss of True Religion, as is well known to every one who knows any thing of Church History. And here I would not be understood to lay the Charge of Sin upon those, who modestly doubt, or reverently ask for Reasons and Arguments, why they should believe in Jesus Christ, and who have taken due Pains to examine the Evidences about him, and upon the Whole have some Scruples really conscientious, which they cannot overcome, relating to some Part or Parts of his assumed Character from God; but what those insuperable Difficulties can be, to a Man that hath made his Enquiry with Sincerity and Diligence, I know not; but this I know, that the Son of God himself ever resolved the want of Faith in those, who saw the Evidences of his divine Mission, into a Want of Love for all Religion; *How can ye believe*, says he, *who have no Love for the Truth in you?* was his Saying to the unbelieving *Jews*. But how few are the modest Doubters amongst us, in comparison of the many that take a wicked Pleasure in drawing of the People from all sorts of Established Religion; that labour to subvert our own good Religion, a Religion that in all Ages hath yielded great Peace and Safety to Civil Society, with innumerable Comforts to the Mind of every true Believer, and for such a Religion offer us nothing in the room of it; whose true Meaning is to make every one's Faith just what every one pleases, and that after all the Blessings offered by God in his Son, have the Assurance to declare in a Christian Country, that they want no Instruction from him, no Mediator to transact the Affairs of their Salvation; no Grace, and no Assistance to get to Heaven; that are grown insolent in Writing and publick Talking in this wicked Manner; writing not with superior Reason, but superior Assurance, as if all the Reason of Things was on their Side; when, if any impartial Person will take the Pains to read what is written against the Gospel, will find, they are old exploded No-

tions, that have been answered over and over, and at the same Time these Writers shall take no Notice of the Answers to them, and in their Writings they are pleased to call all Men Bigots and Fools, that believe in the Established Religion, when it is plain to a Demonstration, that they are the greatest Fools upon Earth, if such deserve that Character, who refuse to imbrace clear Evidence, set before them in many different Views: But there is a greater Folly than all this, and concerns many in this present Age, and that is, instead of yielding to Arguments, which they cannot answer, they take a miserable Refuge in Scoffing and Ridicule; a greater Sin than which, when it concerns Matters sacred, and of the highest Concernment, Reason knoweth not, nor hath the Word of God revealed unto us.

The Prophets of old, we read, were ordered from Time to Time to threaten grievous Calamities of all Kinds upon the People, whenever they put a Slight upon the Law of *Moses*; which Calamities always came to pass, unless the People speedily repented and reformed. And this is a Fact in History, which no one ever yet pretended to deny. And yet the Law of *Moses*, neither in the Goodness of its Precepts, the Clearness of Evidence for its Commands, nor the Comforts of its Promises, was equal to the Laws and Promises of the Gospel: And therefore, till the Christian Religion shall be proved not to be the Word of God, it must be exceedingly dangerous, for those who have heard of it, to put a Contempt upon it; or should it be found by the God above, that the present Generation of Men have been guilty, in great Numbers, of scoffing at what they have been often told is the Word of God; his last Commands to the World about their Faith and Manners, and what they could not with Reason deny to be so, let such give a Reason, if they can, why God should not be avenged on such a Nation as this: To such a People, there are no Hopes but in the Mercy of God; which, I hope, all such will fly to immediately; awakened with the dreadful Sight of God's Judgments hanging over this Nation, fly to him; I hope they will forthwith, with all the Tokens of a better Mind, and Resolutions of a sincere Repentance.

Thirdly, Another very crying Sin, which hath been some Time increasing upon us, is the Contempt of the Clergy: We know from what Quarter this comes; it must be from the unbelieving
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Side, or the wicked Part of Mankind, for no Reason upon Earth can be given, why a Christian Ministry should be the Object of Contempt, from any that wish well to the Christian Religion, or indeed the Cause of Virtue and Goodness in any Kind, unless it should happen that the Clergy, as a Body, should sink into Vice or Ignorance, which whenever happens to be their just Character, in vain will they hope for Respect from a discerning or a virtuous People; but, thanks be to God, that cannot be truly said of the Body of them at present, for in no Age of the Church can it be found, that the Gospel was better understood, or more rationally taught; and therefore, as this is a wicked Age we live in, the great Sin of the People is, that they are wicked under good Instructions: And happy so far it is for the Age we live in, that few, I hope, of the Priests take part with the Unbelievers, fewer yet that dare soothe and flatter them in their Vices; for should that ever be the unhappy Lot of this Nation, then may we pronounce, that some heavy Judgment from God will soon be upon us; for, I think, whenever that happened to be the degenerate State of the *Jewish* Church and Nation, God Almighty never spared them, but sent some grievous Calamity forthwith amongst them.

In short, we cannot but judge, when we see continual Contempt and Affronts put upon the Christian Ministry, that the true Reason is, all who do it hate the Religion they preach; we know no other Reason: In like manner it is, when never-ceasing Calumnies and Censures are cast upon Ministers of State in every Succession of them: 'This comes from those who mean to have no Government over them, or none where they are not Ministers in it; and we shall therefore find at last, that for want of due Reverence to both, the Church and State will be the great Sufferers under it; for no Government upon Earth can stand, when Pains is continually taken with the People, to make them think ill of those, who have the Care of each committed to them.

Pass we on now to make some Remarks on our Behaviour of another Kind, I mean to the Civil Government established by Law amongst us. And here if we look back through the several Reigns of our Princes, as far as the happy Reformation settled under Queen *Elizabeth*, down to the present Time, we shall find every Reign, in one Part or other of it, struggling hard with some

violent Faction: The Complaint of the Factionous always were, and always will be, either that Liberty or Religion is in Danger from the Administration; and yet it is not an allowed Truth in History, that any of these several Princes, except the unhappy King *James* the Second, had any bad Design upon either; but the Truth seems to be, that every Reign is put into a Disorder by the Skill of a few designing Men, Men of Craft, or *Craftmen* in that Way, who artfully hiding their private Views under a generous Concern for publick Good, know how to infuse Fears and Jealousies into the People about their Liberty; and in order to carry on the Scheme, have taken upon them to give what Turn, or what Construction they think fit to all publick Affairs; hence Discontents, Fears and Complaints, have often risen in the People without Cause, the People believing from their Leaders, that their *All* hath been in Danger, when the Secret of the Whole hath been many times nothing more, than that one Side hath been *in*, and the other *out*: And we may be sure, so long as Envy and Self-Interest are leading Passions and Principles in Mankind, or so long as there are many who will be disappointed in their ambitious Views, which always must be in every Government, as long as there are others that are Enemies to the Frame of our Civil Government, others likewise to the Establishment of our Religion, all which put together may make a great Number, so long there will be Addresses made to the People, to put them out of Love with the Administration. Hence it is, perhaps, that we hear, in our own Times, of the vast Power of the Crown, of the Increase of the Prerogative, and the numberless Evils that may ensue from thence in Time, not from his present Majesty it is not said, but from any Royal Successor less good than Himself: But how, I pray, can we ever be enslaved by the Crown, so long as we hold fast our present Constitution? which declares that all Acts of the Crown which are against the Laws of the Land, are mere Nothings; and that they who act under the Crown without such Law, are obnoxious to the Law for so doing, against which the Crown itself cannot protect them.

But were not the Generality of Writers for Liberty either ignorant of the Matter, or greatly prejudiced against the Crown, they would set forth the Danger to Liberty from the Crown being too weak and precarious, as well as too strong; for it is very plain when the Crown, or the executive Part becomes so disabled,
that

that it cannot execute the Laws of the Land, hath not Strength enough to defend itself against Injuries, cannot repress Insolence and Injustice wherever found; when it cannot, in short, controul the unruly Passions of Men, and withal reward the Merit of its Friends, it cannot, in such a Condition, defend the Liberties of the People; What then becomes of the Blessings of Civil Government in such a State? And our Forefathers have told us, that they have felt many Calamities from the Crown being too weak, for whenever they sunk nigh to a Commonwealth, Tyranny always rose in Proportion to it: And the Reason of that was, that Oppression comes always hardest out of the Hands of Equals or Inferiors. Let us therefore in all Times to come take good heed, lest those who talk of nothing so much as delivering us from Oppression, should in Time become our greatest Oppressors. And this will be the Case, I will answer for it, if ever we are so far cheated with designing Men, as to part with our old Constitution either in Church or State: For the best Times always hath been in this Kingdom, when the Body of the People revered their Religion, and no Part of the Constitution incroached upon the other. Besides these pretended Grievances, we have heard it much complained of, that the present Administration was very unwilling to undertake this present War: Cautious I believe they were, before they undertook it; and was it not perfectly right to seek for Redress of Injuries from the present Enemy, by Reason and Argument first, and to endeavour to balance the Differences between us and them, by Treaty in a friendly Way; but when the Enemy refused to give the Satisfaction settled by Treaty, who could be more quick or sooner determined to vindicate the Justice and Honour of the Nation by a vigorous War? And, I hope, where cool Reason can be heard, it will be always thought prudent to be cautious, before we engage in a foreign War; for such Wars are never to be undertaken with the Leave of Religion but as the last Remedy, and that is, when Reason, Argument, and Treaty cannot prevail; so spake the wisest * Heathen, and so speaks every Sentiment both of Religion, and Rational Nature: *Male id Armis tentatur*, says he, *quod Ratione effici potest*.

And if there ever was a Time, when Caution was necessary, it was surely in the present, when the Nation still labours under a
great

* Cicero de Officiis.

great Load of Debt, yet chargeable upon her from the late Wars; when she was to vindicate the Injuries upon her, with her own Strength and her own Expence only, against a Nation then probably to be supported with a strong Alliance; and as far as I can judge, against a Nation, of all others, which we ought least to quarrel with in Point of Prudence, did not the Honour of the Nation absolutely require it at this Time; because a Quarrel with her always brings a present Stop to our most valuable Trade, the Woollen Manufacture, and with that infinite Desolation to the common People: And this we see and hear of, and feel every Day more and more: Therefore such Miseries at Home, by the Loss of our Woollen Manufacture, makes this War felt above all others: I pray God, therefore, that though it be a very just War on our Side, taken as the only Remedy to do ourselves Justice for Wrongs received, it may be a short one, and that Means will be found out, either by God's Blessing on our Arms, or an Alteration in the Counsels of the Enemy, to bring us back very soon an honourable Peace, and with it a lasting Friendship on both Sides; for as far as I can judge, it is for the natural Interest of both Kingdoms that it should be so.

In the mean-time, whilst the War is depending, let the good Subject think it his Duty, to give all the Honour and good Credit that is due to the Administration; reposing an intire Trust and Confidence in their best Endeavours, under God, of bringing us safe out of it; for without this general good Trust and Confidence of the Nation in the Administration, it will not be in their Power to do us all the real good they intend; the greatest Enemies they have, have not yet said, nor can say with any Colour of Truth, that in carrying on this War, the Administration can have any possible View, or Interest, but what is the general Interest of the Kingdom: His Majesty fights not with the Enemy out of false Maxims of Honour and Glory, to enlarge his Dominions, or make Himself a greater Monarch than He is, at the Expence of the Blood and Treasure of his People: His Quarrel with the Enemy, was the Cause of his People, and that only the Want of a free Trade, and Injuries offered to that, by an Enemy unprovoked either by his Majesty or his People: He therefore hath Recourse to Arms, as the only Method left Him to do Justice to his injured Subjects, appealing at the same Time to Almighty God, and all *Europe* about Him, for their just Judgment upon the
Equity

Equity of his Proceedings : And on no other Terms, since he hath been obliged to draw His Sword, will He sheath it again till he hath got just Satisfaction for the Wrongs of his Subjects, together with a sure Stipulation for their future Security, as we are assured by his Royal Word in the Proclamation for this Day.

In short, the Time of War is always a Season wherein many Accidents will arise, which the wisest Government cannot always foresee or prevent ; it is a Time when many more Burdens may be laid upon the Subject, than the Administration would willingly chuse ; Poverty and Misery may rise higher yet upon our People, great as it is at present, for want of Markets for Trade shut up by the Enemy : And such a Situation of Affairs may afford a large Field for Censure, to those who do not love the Administration. In this Part of the Kingdom, so much subsisting by the Woollen Manufacture, the Misery and Poverty of the People is like to be excessive ; it may happen therefore that some may take an Handle from thence, to lay the Blame injuriously on the Administration ; but here let Reason be heard again, and by it let us fairly judge whether the Administration ought to bear the Blame of the unavoidable Calamities arising from the War, on whom it hath been often charged by the opposite Side, that they were unwilling to undertake it : Two Things directly contrary, cannot both be true ; for let them not bear the Blame of going into a War with too much Caution, and now the War is begun, with being the Authors of all the Misfortunes that flow unavoidably from it : But this hath been the true Spirit of Faction in all Times, to make the Administration bear all the Misfortunes that befall the Kingdom ; nay it hath not been unusual to see one Side charge the other with all those ill Effects that happen, of which they themselves have been the chief Authors.

But let us, as we are a sensible and a knowing People, learn to get Wisdom by the Experience of past Times : Let us now consider whether there can possibly be any Means of Safety for ourselves, more sure than giving all the Trust, good Opinion, and Confidence we can in Truth to them, who have the Management of the War in their Hands : Can censuring, distressing, and weakening their Hands, be a proper Means to help us safely out of it ? No, that is impossible, and yet on the happy Conclusion of it depends the Security of every thing that is dear and valuable to us : On the Event of this War depends whether we shall ever
ride

ride Superior at Sea again; whether we shall be the future Terror or Contempt of our present Enemies; whether we shall keep our Civil Liberty or Religion; or whether our best Trade shall return any more.

The present, therefore, is a critical Situation of Affairs, extremely hazardous, and to us all extremely burthensome; turn which Way you will, whether to the landed or the trading Interest: But as the Generality of the Nation have made it their Choice, it is the Nation's Duty, out of Honour and Justice to his Majesty, to support him under it; to support him with their best Respects, as well as best Assistance, every Man in the mean-time quietly bearing his own Burden that belongs to it.

In the next Place, for the same Reason I recommended a due Honour to the Administration, I now heartily recommend it to you to drop all Party Quarrels one amongst another; it is of all Times the most dangerous to quarrel at Home, when we are fighting against an Enemy Abroad: And what, I pray, is there of Moment we can quarrel about amongst ourselves? Have we not the very Constitution in Church and State that we like? And is not the Administration of Publick Affairs, at present, just as we would all have it? The Contention some Time ago was, indeed, whether we should go to War or not, but that grand Affair is now agreed amongst us all, and I do not know what remains at present to divide upon; but it needs must be that Divisions will come: But I think none can be worse Enemies to their Country, than those who causlessly promote them, in as much as thereby they stir up new Enemies Abroad against us, and make our present Foes the more intractable: All *Europe* knowing, we have hitherto been invincible, when united, but contemptible we must be, when broken amongst ourselves: And this is not the only melancholy View our Divisions give us, but they eat out, by Degrees, all the social Virtues amongst us: For can we see Mankind in any Part of the World hate one another more, or bite one another more keenly, than one Man does another in this Kingdom, led on by Party Measures? Can we believe, in earnest, that our Religion allows of this; or that Almighty God will dispense with the everlasting Law of Benevolence, to please this Side or that Side, on any Account whatsoever? No, he hath told us himself, the Temper of Love is indispensable, for upon it he hath hung all the Law and the Prophets: And I cannot but say, that I really
fear,

fear, lest Almighty God should turn the present War into a Scourge for our Sins; and, amongst the rest, for the great and crying one of Uncharitableness, in carrying on needless Parties and Divisions one amongst another; for it hath been commonly said, that our Divisions at Home greatly encouraged the Enemy Abroad to wage this War with us: Should we therefore be distressed in it, we ought not to impeach the Justice of God, who makes our own Follies the Instrument of punishing us for the Wickedness of them: He served his own peculiar People of old in the same Manner, when he gave them up to a final Destruction; for as their own Historian relates, Divisions and Parties ran so high amongst them, even in the last Siege of the City by *Vespasian*, that they fought one Day against the foreign Enemy, another against themselves; insomuch that he makes it a Question, Whether more died by the foreign Enemy, or the Famine, or the civil Rage one against another; for all three fore Calamities were upon them at the same Time. And thus fell a People once the great Favourites of Heaven, that had been settled in the most plentiful Country in the World by the Hand of God, preserved in it by innumerable Miracles, and who had received from his own Mouth a Body both of Civil Laws, and Religious Commands. They were a People that all their Enemies upon Earth were not suffered to hurt, so long as they observed the Laws and Commands of God; but their Fall is a Warning to all Nations, that they do not put a Slight upon the Commands of God, and particularly not offer a Despight to the Message sent us by his Son, nor violate the Rules of Christian Charity one amongst another.

Let us therefore on all Accounts, whether for the Sake of our Religion, or Peace at Home, or Victory Abroad, study all of us at present, who shall wear the most friendly and compassionate Temper one to another: And to this Charity of our Tempers, let us add that of our Alms, as far as we can, to the great Numbers of the Naked, the Hungry, and every way Miserable about us; for sure never was Trade in this Part of the World so little, never Want of Work for the Poor in general so great; and this is the Way to keep a Fast well-pleasing to God; it is to loosen the Bands of Wickedness, to undo the heavy Burdens of the People, to deal our Bread to the Hungry, to clothe the Naked, and hide not our Eyes from seeing the Miseries of our own Flesh and Blood: Let us do this, and God promises to answer when

we call upon him for Help; to send us Joy, and Light, and Peace, and Plenty, as you may read in the *first Lesson* of the *Morning Service* for the Day.

Therefore, *Lastly*, not to be ready now, at this Season, when we are called upon by Authority to humble our Souls before God, in the true Method of Fasting, adding Prayers, Charity, and Repentance with it; not to examine each one his Heart, with regard to the crying Sins of the Nation, such as Atheism, Infidelity, Profaneness, Hardness of Heart, Heresies, Schisms, uncharitable Divisions, and the like; not to try our Hearts and Lives to the Bottom likewise, for a true Knowledge of ourselves in every Part of our Moral Character; is to add to all our other Sins, and may direct God's Hand to strike immediately, which seems uplifted against us: For it is the Sense of our Governors, and ought to be the Sense of us all, that our present Security lieth not in the Justice of our Cause, which is very clear for us; not in our Armies and Fleets, not in the Conduct of our Officers, or Valour of our Troops, for all these put together will not do it: But it lieth in the Blessing of God going along with them, who can order his Winds to fight for us, or against us; who can give Victory or deny it, by ten thousand Accidents, which neither Human Prudence can foresee, or Human Strength avert: And this is so far true with regard to the Fate of Kingdoms, that I do not remember to have read the History of any decisive Battel fought, wherein what Men usually call Fortune, and should call Providence, had not a greater Share than any other Cause whatever, the Victory being so often obtained by Accidents unforeseen: And the known Way to ingage Providence on our Side, is by Prayers, Faith, Charity, and Repentance: And this pious Sentiment we borrow not only from our present Governors, but from the concurrent Testimony of Scripture, who tell us, and tell us truly, that the greatest Things which a People who are going to War have to fear is from their Sins, lest whilst they are arming against the present Enemy, their Sins should be arming Heaven against them.

Do we all of us then wish well, and in earnest, to the Arms of our Country? Let each one offer this Assistance to them, by ingaging Heaven on their Side by his Prayers, and a speedy Reformation of his Manners: Let us make our Peace with God, and with one another at Home, and then we may safely trust Providence

vidence for providing a good Peace Abroad: This we all can do, and it is the very best Thing that can be done: This Method hath saved many a Country from impending Ruin, and may save our own; for no Preparation for War on the Part of the Government can be safely trusted to, unless the People prepare at the same Time to amend their Lives.

What remains, but that we beseech Almighty God that the same good Providence which hath so often wonderfully preserved this Church and Nation, would interpose his present Assistance against two Popish Powers now combined against us; one of which would rob us of our lawful Trade, and both of the Glory of our Land, the Reformed Church in it: That he would bless his present Majesty on the Throne, the great Guardian and Security of all our Liberties, both Sacred and Civil: Preserve him from open Violences and secret Treacheries, and with him our antient Constitution to us both in Church and State.

And as we hope we can truly say unto Thee, O God, that there are a Number of good People amongst us, of such who delight to live in the Fear of Thee, to honour thy Name and Providence, and to praise Thee evermore for the invaluable Blessings of the Christian Religion; so let the Prayers of such good People intercede with Thee for the common Safety; that so the Atheist and Unbeliever, and whoever else there is amongst us, that is the Reproach of thy People, seeing thy kind Providence interpose for the Security of this Church and Nation, may learn at last to glorify Thee, with us, in the common Assemblies of Religion, Thee the Sovereign Author of all Blessings.

To Whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory evermore. Amen.

vidence for providing a good Peace Abroad: This we all can do, and it is the very best Thing that can be done: This Method hath saved many a Country from impending Ruin, and may save our own: for no Preparation for War on the Part of the Government can be fully made, unless the People prepare at the same Time to amend their Lives.

What remains, but that we beseech Almighty God that the same good Providence which hath so often wonderfully preserved this Church and Nation, would interpose his potent Assistance against two Popish Powers now combined against us: one of which would rob us of our lawful Liberty, and both of the Glory of our Land, the Reformed Church in it: I hope he would bless his great Majesty on the Throne, the great Guardian and Security of all our Liberties, both Sacred and Civil: Protect him from open Violence and secret Treacheries, and with him our ancient Constitution to be both in Church and State.

And as we hope we can truly say unto Thee, O God, that there are a Number of good People amongst us, of such who delight to live in the Fear of Thee, to honour Thy Name and Providence, and to praise Thy Name for the invaluable Blessings of the Christian Religion; to let the Prayers of such good People intercede with Thee for the common Safety: that to the Atheist and Unbeliever, and whoever else there is amongst us, that is the Province of the People, I hope Thy kind Providence interpose for the Security of this Church and Nation, may I am at last to glorify Thee, with us in the common Assemblies of Religion, Thee the Sovereign Author of all Blessings.

To Whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory forever. Amen.

